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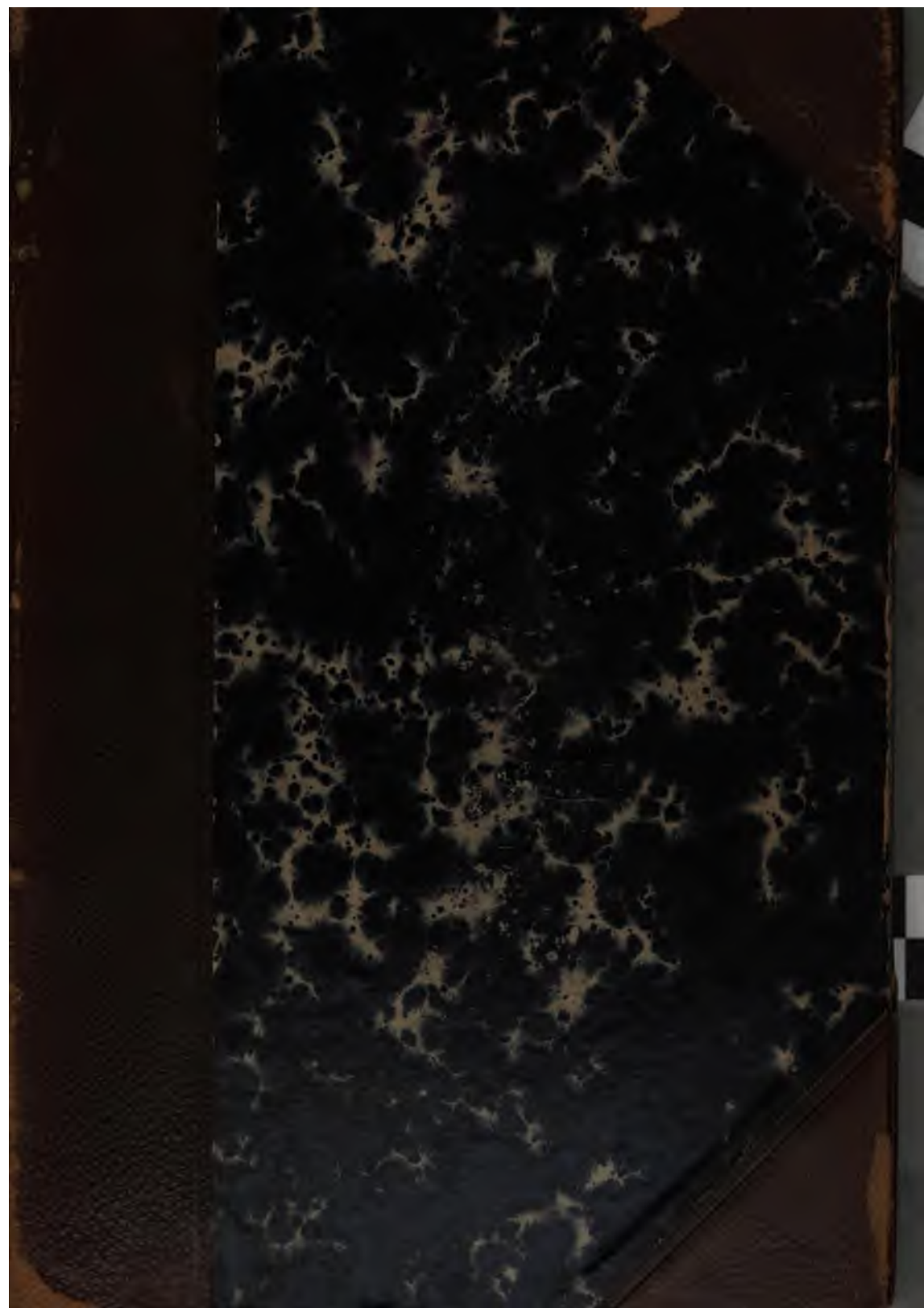
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Chaucer Society.

The Harleian Manuscript 7334
and
Revision of the Canterbury Tales

BY

JOHN S. P. TATLOCK, PH.D.

JUNIOR PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, AUTHOR OF
"THE DEVELOPMENT AND CHRONOLOGY OF CHAUCER'S WORKS."

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE CHAUCER SOCIETY

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1909, for the Issue of 1904

The Chaucer Society.

Editor in Chief.—Dr F. J. FURNIVALL, 3, St George's Square, Primrose Hill, N.W.
Hon. Sec..—W. A. DALZIEL, Esq., 67, Victoria Road, Finsbury Park, London, N.

To do honour to CHAUCER, and to let the lovers and students of him see how far the best unprinted Manuscripts of his works differed from the printed texts, this Society was founded in 1868. There were then, and are still, many questions of metre, pronunciation, orthography, and etymology yet to be settled, for which more prints of Manuscripts were and are wanted; and it is hardly too much to say that every line of Chaucer contains points that need reconsideration. The founder (Dr Furnivall) began with *The Canterbury Tales*, and has given of them (in parallel columns in Royal 4to) six of the best theretofore unprinted Manuscripts known. Inasmuch as the parallel arrangement necessitated the alteration of the places of certain tales in some of the MSS, a print of each MS has been issued separately, following the order of its original. The first six MSS printed have been: the Ellesmere (by leave of the Earl of Ellesmere); the Hengwrt (by leave of W. W. E. Wynne, Esq.); the Camb. Univ. Libr., MS Gg. 4. 27; the Corpus, Oxford; the Petworth (by leave of Lord Leconfield); and the Lansdowne 851 (Brit. Mus.). The Harleian 7334 has followed, and the Cambridge Dd., completed by Egerton 2726 (the Haistwell MS.) *Specimens of all accessible MSS of the Tales* are now nearly completed, edited by the late Prof. Zupitza, Ph.D., and Prof. John Koch, Ph.D. Lady Cardigan will not allow her MS to be seen.

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- XVII. " " " " " " " " Cambridge MS. Part III.
- XVIII. " " " " " " " " Corpus MS. Part III.
- XIX. The Shipman's, Prioress's, and Man of Law's Tales, from the Petworth MS. Part III.

The Harleian Manuscript 7334
and
Revision of the Canterbury Tales

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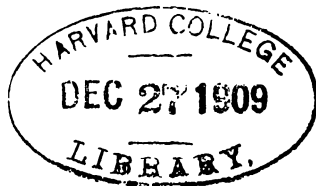
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DEDICATION.

E 'l buon Maestro : Prima che pih entre,
Sappi che se' nel secondo girone,
Mi cominciò a dire, e sarai, mentre
Che tu verrai nell' orribil sabbione.

For Chaucer, more than for most poets, there are questions to be answered and work to be done which take the student into a desert place where no water is ; a region of arbitrary and meaningless detail.

Lo spazzo era un' arena arida e spessa.

He is fain to become a serf bound to the soil, which is the *litera scripta*. On every page he must bow his neck to the 3, and in every line the þ's spring up and choke him. He must be faithful to the soil, sterile though it seems, for only thence cometh his good increase. Yet it requires all his attachment to his poet, and all his interest in his problem, to keep him faithful. That a student can devote much of a long life to work of this kind without prejudice to his literary or his human nature younger students rejoice to see in the person of Dr. Furnivall. That is why the writer of this paper, which, short though it is, represents very many months of such labour, hopes to be allowed to inscribe it to him.

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The Harleian Manuscript 7334

and

Revision of the Canterbury Tales

§ 1. INTRODUCTORY.

VERY little has yet been done toward a thorough and definitive history and interpretation of the *Canterbury Tales*; so little that it would probably be news to many students of English poetry that such is needed. The fact is that, until very recently, the number and intricacy of the questions which they raise, the inaccessibility of much of the evidence, and the consequent difficulty of reaching trustworthy conclusions, have reduced Chaucer students to silence, or to dropping mere *obiter dicta*. As long as some of the MSS. have not even been described, most of the others have been printed only in small parts and described very inadequately, and only about an eighth have been wholly printed, and as long as, in spite of the work of Zupitza, Koch and others, we have no quite reliable account of their relations to each other, it is difficult to decide such questions as whether Chaucer ever revised the work (as he did the *Troilus* and the prologue to the *Legend*), whether, and (if so) how, he arranged it, whether he published it, and how we are to account for the singular arrangement and contents of many of the MSS. But, while we are waiting, one important point may be clarified, perhaps even settled. From the question whether Chaucer ever revised the work merely in the sense of putting it together more than once with varying arrangements and contents, I wish for the present to disengage the question whether he revised the text in detail. The chief element in this question, and one of the chief puzzles which a textual critic has to face, is the oddities of MS. Harleian 7334,¹ in the British Museum. Are they the work of Chaucer himself? This small book is an attempt to answer the question.

¹ Notorious enough, among eight MSS. of the *Canterbury Tales*, or a part of them, in the Harley collection, so that one may drop the handle and call it Hl.

It is an old one. A generation ago the late Henry Bradshaw, librarian of the University of Cambridge, is said to have been deterred from editing the *Tales* partly by his inability to account for the peculiarities of this MS.¹ More recently, at least three writers have attributed them to Chaucer. Mr. A. W. Pollard² says: "The most probable explanation seems to be that many of these readings represent Chaucer's own 'second thoughts,' introduced into a manuscript which passed through his hand after the *Tales* were already in circulation, and that the Harleian MS. is a careless copy of this manuscript." Dr. Skeat³ quotes this opinion with approval, and adds: "Its chief merit lies in its containing some emendations from an 'inspired' source"; he helps himself to its unique readings whenever he wishes, even oftener than Mr. Pollard does in the *Globe* edition.⁴ Professor Lounsbury seems to think Hl. a copy of Chaucer's "first draught," and the Ellesmere of a "revised and completed" copy.⁵ On the other hand, Dr. John Koch, who probably has given more study to the relations among the MSS. of the *Canterbury Tales* than any other living man, regards most of its unique readings as "decidedly faulty," inferior to those of closely-related MSS., and not due to Chaucer.⁶ Dr. F. J. Mather⁷ regards this MS. or an ancestor as proceeding from an unusually—

¹ *Memoir*, by G. W. Prothero (London, 1888), p. 225, note.

² *Globe Chaucer*, p. xxix; cf. *Athenæum*, no. 3863 (1901), p. 631.

³ *Chaucer Canon*, p. 25; cf. the *Oxford Chaucer*, IV, viii; V, 471.

⁴ They are at times so exceedingly tempting that we can scarcely wonder; but it is noteworthy that the only writers who believe Hl. to be a Chaucerian second edition are editors, who are more exposed than the rest of us to this temptation. In Dr. Skeat's recently-published little book on *The Evolution of the C. T.* (Ch. Soc., 1907), in which his evidence is the contents and arrangement of seven (not all) of the published MSS., and not their readings, he concludes that Hl. represents the last of three or four Chaucerian recensions (see pp. 19, 7, 16, 20). He uses so little of the evidence that I cannot feel he comes anywhere near proving his opinion; or that he adds very much here to the huge debt which students of Middle English in general and of Chaucer in particular owe him. Miss Hammond's views as to several Chaucerian recensions seem to be somewhat similar (see her extremely valuable and indeed indispensable *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, N. Y., 1908, pp. 170, 241, 262; but cf. *Mod. Philol.*, III, 159-178). Neither uses, so neither invalidates, the evidence used here by me.

⁵ *Studies in Chaucer*, I, 324. This, with some further complications, is the view expressed by Miss E. Morley before the London Philological Society in 1901; see the *Athenæum*, no. 3825, p. 216. Professor Child, in his *Observations on the Language of Chaucer*, based on Wright's reprint of this MS., of course assumed it to have had a normal and unbroken descent from Chaucer's original MS., without especial tampering by another (either Wright or anybody). When that distinguished work appeared (1862), there was no idea of the relations among the MSS. of the *Canterbury Tales*.

⁶ *Pardoner's Tale* (1902), p. xlii; *Engl. Stud.*, xxvii, 4, 5.

⁷ *Chaucer's Prologue*, etc., p. 138.

independent scribe or "editor." Professor M. H. Liddell's view is the same.¹

Against the view that Chaucer ever produced two versions of so fragmentary a poem as the *Canterbury Tales*, or revised it to any great extent, I believe there is abundance of evidence to be derived from the MSS. in general, and a great weight of *a priori* probability; but fully to consider these matters will require a far larger book than the present one. For the time being, in order to limit the subject, we may consider only evidence and probabilities derived from HL. itself. A thorough collection and consideration of these will do more than anything else could towards settling the question.

In order to arrive at some reliable conclusion, we should consider all the cases where the Harleian MS. has a reading found in no other. It may be objected that, whether the revisions are by Chaucer or by another, they may have come in so far back in the MS.-tradition that another MS. than HL. may also contain them. To this I can only say that the passages which have caused all this uncertainty are, so far as is known, only in HL.; that the most complete investigation now possible fully establishes its uniqueness; and that to proceed on any other method would beg questions and introduce quite unmanageable complications. Therefore the evidence presented in this paper consists wholly of the unique peculiarities of the Harleian MS. Inasmuch as it is impossible to compare it with all of the more than sixty extant MSS., it is impossible to be absolutely certain of its uniqueness at any point; but high probability is attainable, and any error has consisted in including readings not unique, not in omitting unique readings. In other words, though a very few passages may have been included which are not evidence, no evidence, unless by oversight, has been omitted, which is the chief matter. I have made a complete line for line collation of HL.² with the six MSS. printed by the Chaucer Society in 1868;³ the results I have fully collated with MS. Cambridge Dd.;⁴ those for the *Pardoner's Prologue* and *Tale* also with the forty-four other MSS. printed in these

¹ See the thorough introduction to his excellent volume of selections from the *C. T.* (N. Y., 1901), pp. cxx f.

² Published by the Chaucer Society, dated 1885.

³ MSS. Ellesmere, Hengwrt, Cambridge Gg., Corpus, Petworth and Lansdowne, in what is commonly called the *Six-Text* edition ("S.T.").

⁴ Printed in 1901; supplemented in places by Egerton 2726 (formerly Haistwell), in the British Museum.

parts by Zupitza,¹ and those for the *Clerk's Prologue* and *Tale* with the eight MSS. from which these passages have been printed by Dr. Furnivall;² a number of the more crucial passages in various parts of the work I have looked up in thirty-four unpublished MSS.,³ being all⁴ that exist in public libraries in England and France; and finally all the passages used as evidence I have collated directly with four unpublished MSS.,—the three which Zupitza and Koch⁵ have shown reason (confirmed by my observations) to believe to be, at least in some parts, most nearly related to HL, viz., MSS. Additional 35286 and Harleian 7335 in the British Museum and the MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and also MS. Laud 600 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.⁶ So we have for the whole work evidence derived from eleven carefully selected MSS. besides HL, amounting to nearly one-fifth of the total number; which practically is amply sufficient.

Before I begin, I wish to allay the possible suspicion that the singularity of HL may have been exaggerated; that, aside from a very few notable readings, its peculiarities may be no more or greater than might be expected in any MS. Thorough examination shows that this is simply not true. On the whole, to the textual critic, the most striking and gratifying thing about the MSS. of the *Canterbury Tales* is their unanimity as to readings. By way of a test for the singularity of HL I have treated the Ellesmere, the most careful of the MSS.,⁷ throughout the *Prologue*, the most important and among the most variable parts of the poem, as I had treated HL. In Ellesmere I found less than one-seventh

¹ *Specimens* (1890-8); *MS. Hodson* (1900).

² *Specimens*, pts. VI, VII (1899-1900).

³ These are: (a) In the British Museum: Addit. 5140, 25718, 35286, Egerton 2726 (formerly Haistwell), Harl. 1239, 1758, 7333, 7335, Royal 17D, 18C, Sloane 1685, 1686. (b) In Oxford: Barlow 20, Bodley 414, 686, Christ Church, Hatton, Laud 600, 739, New College, Rawlinson 141, 149, 223, Selden, Trinity College 49. (c) In Cambridge: Camb. II, Mm, Trinity College 3.3, 3.15. (d) Lichfield (Cathedral Library), Lincoln (Cathedral Library), Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale), Royal College of Physicians (London), Sion College (*ibid.*).

⁴ Except MSS. Egerton 2863 (formerly Norton) and 2864 (formerly Ingilby), recently acquired by the British Museum, and a very few containing but a single tale or so, mentioned by Miss Hammond and not by Skeat.

⁵ *Specimens*, Pt. IV, p. xlvii.

⁶ This also was included because of certain resemblances to HL in arrangement; as well as in readings, which appeared later. Cf. pp. 5, 9, 19, 20, 27, below.

⁷ As to arrangement and contents it and its congeners lie under strong suspicion of having been re-edited by another than Chaucer; as most scholars will admit (cf. p. 33, below).

as many unique readings as I had found in Hl., and not more than one of them (l. 23, *were* for *was*) seems worthy to rank with any of those which follow in this paper.

§ 2. PASSAGES IN FAVOUR OF REVISION BY CHAUCER.

Evidences in favour of revision by Chaucer may be divided into changes (chiefly improvements) in the sense or literary style, and changes in the metre. Of the former there are three or four which far outweigh all the other evidence on this side.

- [An haburdassher and a Carpenter
A webbe a deyer and a Tapicer]
(A 363) weren with vsa eekc clothed in oo lyuere¹
(MS. El.²) And they were clothed alle in o lyuerec
(B 4380) Syn march bygan tway monþes and dayes tuo
Syn March bigan thritty dayes and two

From lines 4383-5 it is certain that the month is May, and it is

¹ Worthy to rank with this correction is one in the *Reeve's Prologue*, A 3906, "Lo heer is Depford and it is passed prime," for which almost all of the MSS. (including Paris and Harl. 7335; I have examined 42) read *half-wey prime*. The change to a less early hour is in the interest of realism, since *Kn. T.* and *Mill. T.* have already been recited. But the case is excluded by my rule, since MS. Camb. ii, which is supposed to be quite unrelated, has the same reading. Moreover, MSS. Petworth, Rawlinson 141 and Lichfield read *almost prime*. Oddly, Skeat ignores these very important variants. A similar case is in *Melibeus*, and is one of the two important changes in the prose tales.

(B 2466) & as touchynge þe proposiciouns whiche þe phisiciens han
schewed þou in þis caas . . .
. . . . that the Phisiciens encresceden in this caas . . .

The French original (*Le Ménagier de Paris*, ed. by Jérôme Pichon, I. 206) has "la proposition que les phisiciens adjousterent"; the Latin source of it (by Albertano da Brescia, Ch. Soc., p. 67) has "verbum dubium, quod protulerunt." *Encresceden* is clearly a clumsy translation of *adjousterent*, though I find no parallel for this use of it in the sense of *add*. It is certainly what Chaucer wrote, and is the reading of 29 MSS., out of 34 examined which contain the passage, viz., the 6 *S. T.* MSS., Cm. Dd., Rawl. 141, 149, 223, Ch. Ch., New Coll., Trin. Coll. 49, Hatt., Barl. 20, Arch. Seld., Cm. Mm., Trin. Coll. 3. 15 and 3. 3, Linc. (*encresen*), Hl. 1758 and 7333, Sl. 1686, Roy. 17 D and 18 C, Egerton 2726 and Add. 5140, 25718 and 35286. The passage is lacking in Sion, Laud 739, Bodl. 686, Hl. 1239 and 7335, Paris, Royal Coll. of Phys., Sl. 1685. Bodl. 414 changes the word to *proposid*; Cm. ii to *hadden*; Lichfield to *entreteden*; and Laud 600 (like our Hl.) reads *þe phisiciens han shewid you*. This is an interesting confirmation of the connection which on the ground of arrangement I have conjectured between these two MSS. Skeat's reading is that of Lichfield, but he gets it from Stowe's edition (1861), and it certainly seems quite unjustifiable.

² For the common reading, which I shall always put second, I shall ordinarily quote the Ellesmere MS.; when, for some reason, I take it from another MS., I shall say so. On this passage I have consulted 26 of the 34 MSS. mentioned above (besides the published ones); 10 lack the passage, and 16 have the El. reading (or a close variant).

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(4089-90)

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. . maketh . . go

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On the other hand, all Northern forms (except *leg*) in these unique readings of Hl. may be found elsewhere in the other MSS.; furthermore, in other passages Hl. is less Northern than the others.

- (A 4027) him falles serue himself þat has na swayn
Hym boes
(4033) I prey þou speed vs in al þat þe may
. heythen . . .
(4078) what wikked way is he gan gan he crye
(Hn.) What whilk wey is ho gane he gan to crye
(4202) Now may I say þat I am but an ape
. is

On the whole, it would rather seem that, although (what is quite certain) most of the scribes noticed and looked out for the dialect-talk, someone has been touching it up in Hl. who was unusually conversant with the matter.

Next I record a considerable number of slight improvements (or what might be deemed such by some) which affect the sense or style; in this list I have meant to include all that can fairly be considered of the least significance.

- (A 527-8) But cristes lore and his apostles twelue
he taught and ferst he folwed it himselue
But
. . . but
(A 583) Of [*sic*] lyue as scarsly as he can desire
Or lyue as scarsly as hym list desire
(A 1017) [*Sic*] Heraudes knewe hem wel in special
The heraudes knewe hem best in special¹
(1104, 1110) And seyde venus if it be þoure wil . . .
Of oure lynage haueth sum compassioun
. thy
. haue²
(1217) But took his leene and homward he him spedde
. . . taketh spedde³
(1999) The smyler wiþ þe knyf under his cloke
The . . . the . . . the .

¹ In *special* of course means *especially*.

² Line 1105 in all the published MSS. has the pl. *þow*. In prayers, as elsewhere, Chaucer not seldom switches from singular to plural; e. g. 2237, 2249, 2254, 2312; especially perhaps to goddesses, who might be addressed like ladies, but also to God in *Frankl. T.*, F 867, 872, 876, 881. MS. Paris has the pl. in line 1104. Similarly in D 1012 only Hl. and Paris (out of 11 MSS. consulted) straighten out the pronouns.

³ The preceding line has the preterite tense. Chaucer often mixes tenses *ad libitum*; but some uniformity is certainly an improvement.

- (2943) Ne how she swowned whan sche made þe fyre
 men¹ (Hn.)
- (3014-15) [Schullen endure by successiouns]
 And nat eterne be wipoute lye
 And nat eterne with outen any lye
- (3814) As he were wood anon he gan to crye
 wood for wo
- (B 3859) Fals infortune and poyson to deuysen
 false ffortune and poyson to despise
- (C 545) Schal ben his sauce maad to his delyt
 ymaked by delit²
- (D 361) ȝit couþe I make his berd þough queynte he be
 so moot I thee
- (900) And after þus sche spak vnto þe knight
 this thus spak she to
- (E 2012) he doth al þat vnto his lady likith
 his lady lust and lyketh
- (G 92) Or cecile is to say þe way of blynde
 the way to blynde
- (676-7) [And make hem wenen atte leste weye]
 That of a pound we conne make tweye
 we coude

In this second list, though in each case some possible motive for the change is visible, I think all will agree that there is not the slightest necessity for seeing Chaucer's hand at work. Most of the passages might have been neglected without unfairness, for in most of them the improvement (such as it is) may not even have been conscious.

§ 3. METRICAL EVIDENCE.

The variants of the next class are metrical.⁴ The reviser had a much better ear, and much more independence, than most scribes.

¹ It is Emily who, according to the preceding line, had kindled the fire. MSS. Laud 600, Cp., Pt., Ln. have ". . . whan made was the fire."

² Paris reads "as he were wood he gan for to crye," which may be a middle term between the usual and the Hl. readings. In other cases too the Hl. reading may be a correction of an obviously corrupt, and not of the original, reading; but, clearly, this possibility does not deprive Hl. of its unique position.

³ This and all other passages quoted from C 287-968 I have collated (as I stated earlier) with the 44 other MSS. and 3 early editions used by Zupitza, Koch and Furnivall in their *Specimens*.

⁴ In this section I ordinarily disregard changes due to the presence or absence of a single letter (as *singen* for *singe*), or to the insignificant substitution of one grammatical form for another, even if the metre is affected by them.

First, I record the lines in which the movement is improved ✓
without any change of length.

- (A 196) he hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pin¹
 wrought a ful . . . (MS. Hn.)
- (516) he was to senful man nought dispitous
 He was nat to synful man despitous²
- (876) I wolde han told þow fully þe manere
 yow haue toold³
- (3941) his name was hooete deynous Symekyn
 Symkyn⁴
- (3957) was noon so hardy walkyng by þe weye
 that wente by the weye
- (4029) Our mancypyle as I hope wil be deed
 Oure Manciple I hope he wil be deed⁵
- (4066) For[*sic*]wip wihe þurgh pikke and eek þurgh penne
 And forth with wehe þour theke & thorw thenne (MS. Cm.)
- (B 4045) By nature knew he ech ascensioun
 he knew (MS. Hn.)

In many or most of these cases the change is probably due to
supplying a word which had dropped out.

Next I mention the cases where an overlong line⁶ is reduced to ✓
the norm.

- (A 514) He was a schepparde and no mercenarie
 and noght a . . .
- (520) By good ensample was his busynesse
 this was his . . .

¹ Laud 600 and Addit. 35286 omit both *y-* and *ful*, thus perhaps affording another middle term.

² MS. Laud 600 reads: "He was to sinful men nat to dispetous."

³ Laud 600, Addit. 35286, Paris, and 6 of the published MSS. omit *yow* in both places.

⁴ Similarly l. 3959; but cf. p. 15, below. Skeat's *deynous* seems no more possible than his *sejnt* in A 120, 697, etc.—The change by HL in B 3912 is paralleled in Laud 600.

⁵ MS. Paris reads: ". . . ple I hope wil . . ."

⁶ Chaucer seems for some reason not seldom to admit this irregularity. Lines of fully 12 syllables will be found in G 1427 (in the 8 published MSS.), *Compl. of Venus* 81, *Leg. of G. W.* 1126 (in all the MSS.). Mr. Saintsbury (*Prosody*, I, 174–5) regards Chaucer's Alexandrines as an "easement"; but none of his examples seem well selected. See also Schipper, *Grundriss der engl. Metrik* (1895), 205 ff.; *Altengl. Metrik* (1881), 440 ff.; ten Brink, *Chaucers Sprache u. Verskunst* (1899), p. 175; Liddell, *The Prologue*, etc. (1901), pp. xc ff.; Miss Hammond, *Bibliogr. Manual*, pp. 499–500.

- (764) I ne saugh þis ȝeer so mery a companye¹
 I saugh nat this ȝeer
- (2420) ȝif me þy victorie I aske no more
 Yif me the victorie I aske thee namoore
- (2801) And ȝet more ouer in his armes twoo
 for in hise
- (3008) Of no partye ne cantel of a þing
 or of cantel
- (D 1319) And hadde þurgh his iurediccioun
 And thanne hadde he thurgh his Iurisdiccion

In a much larger number of cases, Hl. stands alone in giving a hypermetrical line; but of course these may be put on the shoulders of another scribe than our reviser. Some of them, however, look as genuine as those just given.

Much the largest and most important class of metrical improvements are where Hl. seems to correct lines in which in the eleven other MSS. consulted a syllable is lacking—9-syllable lines, as they are generally called. I give all the instances which I have found where Hl. alone makes the correction, though sometimes it does not seem as if Chaucer could be responsible for the original line. That Chaucer sometimes wrote 9-syllable lines there cannot be a doubt; nor that the reviser objected to them. The cases are too numerous to give in full; therefore I merely extract a few samples and then give the whole list by references.²

- (A 2822) For in swich caas wommen can haue such sorwe
 ffor in swich cas wommen have³ swich sorwe
- (F 266) whan þat þis gentil kyng þis Cambynskan
 Whan þat this Tartre kyng Cambynskan⁴
- (H 99) O þou bacus I-blessid be þin name
 O Bacus yblessed be thy name

¹ The line is normal when read "I n' saugh" (cf. ten Brink, § 272); at any rate it is better than the alternative. I omit A 2060 (paralleled in Harl. 7335), and B 578 (in Paris).

² In the list have been included even lines where the deficiency stands elsewhere than at the beginning, even after the cæsura, and also lines which admitting hiatus would make normal. Does not the whole matter of these deficient lines require a new and thorough examination, which shall take account of various readings, the pronunciation of final syllables, the possibility of hiatus, the position of the deficiency, and the like? On one class of 9-syllable lines see the rather inconvenient dissertation by Marcus Freudenberger, *Über das Fehlen des Auftakts in Chaucers heroischem Verse*, Erlangen, 1889; also published in the *Erlanger Beiträge*, vol. I.

³ *Have* is always monosyllabic in the *Troilus* (Kittredge, *Observations*, p. 344). The presence in Hl. of the very un-Chaucerian locution "can have," however, at least offsets the improvement in the metre.

⁴ Harl. 7335 reads "When that this gentil tartre kyng Cambynskan," which suggests the origin of the reading in Harl. 7334.

A 338 ¹	2127	3036	791	E 257 ¹⁰
371 ²	2369	3071	1150	1364
485 ³	2385 ⁵	3104	1156	F 266
741	2489	3236	3553 ⁷	330
752	2822	3483	C 534 ⁸	H 99
778	2854	4385	D 882	327
1511 ⁴	2892	B 37	1647	
1797	2904	497	1768 ⁷	
1886	2952	621 ⁶	2289 ⁹	

It is striking that while 9-syllable lines occur with about uniform frequency throughout the poem, three-quarters of the Harleian corrections are in the first third of it. This is only one of several indications that the zeal of the "reviser" abated as he proceeded.

These cases, which are all that I have found, are certainly striking enough to indicate that the reviser deliberately attended to the matter; even though in some of them the alternative reading seems impossible. The attention which Hl. gives to 9-syllable lines is the more striking when one examines the other seven published MSS. in this regard. In Group A, Hl. stands by itself in correcting about 24 9-syllable lines; the others, so far as I find, in correcting only the following:

Ellesmere, 1226	Hengwrt, none
Corpus, 1535	Cambridge Gg, none
Cambridge Dd, 391 ¹¹	Petworth, none
	Lansdowne, none

The ordinary scribe may have occasionally been capable of noticing a metrical imperfection and remedying it; but he was incapable of the consuming zeal of our reviser.¹²

This matter of 9-syllable lines may seem at first sight evidence

¹ A later hand in MS. Paris tries to correct the metre.

² Cf. Freudenberger; and ten Brink, *Chaucers Sprache*, § 262.

³ Attention should be emphatically called to the fact that in the *S. T.* letters and words in square brackets are inserted by the editor (see *Temporary Preface*, p. 88); not wisely, but too well.

⁴ *Welcome* apparently is always dissyllabic within the verse.

⁵ Cf. p. 30, below.

⁶ Corrected, differently, by MS. Paris; so also B 1060.

⁷ On these two lines, by oversight, MS. Laud 600 was not consulted.

⁸ Corrected, differently, by MSS. Northumberland and Selden.

⁹ Cf. p. 19, below.

¹⁰ Similarly MS. Sion.

¹¹ In the whole poem, Cm. Dd seems to stand by itself among the published MSS. in correcting the following: A 391; B 1404, 4150, 4379; D 188, 1392; E 2194, 2240; F 251, 542.

¹² In scores and scores of cases Hl. gives a 9-syllable line where none of the other MSS. do, just as the others do elsewhere; here of course the responsibility may rest on a later scribe, and even our zealous reviser could hardly watch with eternal lids apart. We are justified in attaching importance to the one set of cases and not to the other because the addition of words

in favour of revision by Chaucer. I believe, however, that it is evidence in the opposite direction. A well-known passage in the *House of Fame* (1098) shows that in his 8-syllable verse Chaucer was quite conscious of writing verses similarly deficient in length, though it is also clear that he was apologetic about them; and, whether inadvertently or not, it cannot be doubted that he not seldom wrote them¹ in his 10-syllable verse. It is also noteworthy

or syllables is more deliberate, and therefore more significant, than the omission of them. In A 175, however, it looks as if the reviser made a 9-syllable line in remedying another eccentricity of style. Of 9-syllable lines which stand in both Hl. and also one or more of the other MSS., but which are of normal length in the rest of them, there are one or two hundred; which reading is genuine it would sometimes be hard to determine. It may be worth while to give a list, which I believe to be fairly accurate, of the presumably genuine 9-syllable lines which Hl. does not correct; i. e., which in all eight printed MSS. seems to be thus deficient:

A 76	2725	3535	772	346
170	2770	3600	D 529	390
247	2837	3616	595	549
384	2864	3753	672	1276
697	2928	3792	871	1406
1014	3308	3804	1647	G 341
1182	4286	? 4155	1695	602
1350	4379	C 174	1805	963
1535	B 404	363	2004	1226
1656	1506	495	E 675	1454
1799	2110	502	1682	H 215
1930	2141	532	2291	224
1931	2153	? 599	2410	I 30
2029	3116	603	2424	
2030	3130	609	F 165	

A few of these lines may be regarded as of normal length if we admit hiatus. The list contains 73 cases; so it will be seen that among the 9-syllable lines Hl. leaves unchanged nearly twice as many as it corrects.

¹ Ten Brink (*Chaucers Sprache u. Verskunst*, ed. of 1899, pp. 174-5) would like to regard all 9-syllable lines as corruptions, but does not quite do so. They are recognized as genuine reluctantly by Saintsbury (*Prosody*, I, 170-1), more cheerfully by Schipper (*Grundriss*, 205-6; *Allengl. Metrik*, 462-3), and by Kittredge (*Observations on the Language of the Troilus*, pp. 405-421), and triumphantly by Skeat (*Oxford Chaucer*, III, xlv. ff.). Cf. also Miss Hammond, *Bibliogr. Manual*, pp. 497-9. Ten Brink regards such defective lines in 8-syllable verse as essentially different from those in 10-syllable verse; it is true that later poetry is more inclined to allow the former (as in Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*) than the latter, but an essential difference I find it impossible to grant. Certainly no such rule had been formed in Chaucer's day, as one can see in a moment by observing the practice of his contemporaries. Similarly defective lines sometimes occur in Old French couplet-verse; see *Modern Lang. Notes*, XII, 21. They are common in Anglo-Norman poetry (Schipper, *Allengl. Metrik*, p. 438); especially have I found them now and then in the 8-syllable verse of Wace's *Roman de Brut* (ed. by Le Roux de Lincy), e.g., ll. 878, 2255, 2746. I have even remarked one or two examples in Browning's 10-syllable blank verse, an especially unexpected place (*The Ring and the Book*; *Guido*, ll. 521, 853):

"Plainly, and need so be put aside;"

"One makes fools look foolisher fifty-fold."

They are not very uncommon in the 10-syllable verse of Shelley and Keats.

that 9-syllable lines are particularly frequent in the *Squire's Tale*, which there is good reason, in its style and its unfinished state, to believe one of the last poems which Chaucer wrote.¹ If he wrote such lines till almost the end of his poetic career, it would be extraordinary that he should turn decidedly against them in the short time that remained to him. Moreover, that these changes are not due to Chaucer there is even some positive evidence. I find at least four cases in the *Prologue* and *Knight's Tale* where the unique reading of HL is clearly due to the correction by it or an ancestor of a corrupt reading which made a 9-syllable line.² If, then, somebody after Chaucer's day paid considerable attention to this matter, is it not natural to make him responsible for all such unique readings? I shall show later other cases of scribes similarly, though less, critical.

The other kinds of metrical peculiarities in HL are still more unmistakably opposed to revision by Chaucer. In a large number of lines, HL alone inserts words or syllables with the effect and often with the apparent purpose of reducing the number of unaccented e's (usually final) which it is necessary to pronounce; it does so even in some cases at the cost of leaving a 9-syllable line. One gains the very strong impression that the reviser did not pronounce as many unaccented e's as the original writer. That at the age of sixty or so Chaucer changed his usage and accordingly altered the poetry which he had just recently been writing, would of course be an absurd suggestion; that a fifteenth-century reviser, who we have already seen had a strong feeling for the movement of verse, should have made the alterations, is not so extraordinary. This sort of modernization, though unusual, is occasionally to be detected elsewhere, notably in one or two MSS. of the *Legend of Good Women*;³ in one of them has also been pointed out a tendency toward more

¹ Mr. Lounsbury (*Studies*, III, 317-8) thinks the first part of the tale (ll. 9-346) was thoroughly corrected by Chaucer, and the remainder (347-672) not. If this is true, it does not affect my argument; in the 338 earlier lines Freudenberger gives eight 9-syllable lines and in the 326 later ones he gives nine.

² The list is A 688, 795, 2583, 2600; sometimes one or two other MSS. supply the corrupt middle term. The possible suggestion that Chaucer might have been correcting a corrupted copy would imply some multiplication of copies during his lifetime, and a very odd forgetfulness on his part of what he had originally written.

³ See J. B. Bilderbeck, *Chaucer's Legend of Good Women* (London, 1902), pp. 34, 55, 56, 58. So far as I can learn, it is not to be found in other MSS. of the C.T. In the Ellesmere MS. in the *Prologue* I find but two cases (out of 21 variant lines) which could be considered at all (512, *kepeth* for *kepte*; 828, *lordynges* for *lordes*), and these cannot rank with most of the cases in HL.

drastic modernization, in vocabulary. The striking thing in Hl. is the frequency of these unique readings in what is one of the oldest, if not quite the oldest, of the MSS. of the *Canterbury Tales*. I give a few specimens.

- (A 241) And euery Ostiller or gay tapstere
And euerich Hostiler and Tappestere
- (377) And for to go to vigillies al byfore
And goon to vigillies al bifore
- (407) He knew wel alle þe hauenes as þei were
He knew alle the hauenes as they were
- (452) That sche was þanne out of alle charitee
That she was was out of alle charitee
- (2927) In which þey whilom woned in rest and pees
In whiche they woneden in reste and pees
- (3315) And strowted as a fan right large and brood
And strouted as a fflanne large and brode
- (3336) Ther as any gaylard tapster was ¹
Ther any gaylard Tappestere was
- (3793) I am þyn absolon, O my derlyng
I am thyn Absolon / my deerelyng

In the 4422 lines of Group A, out of 1000 variant lines I find 106 such cases, where the resulting line is readable.

Certain considerations may be thought to reduce the value of this evidence. Not all of these readings can certainly be attributed to our reviser; and there are of course vast numbers of such *e*'s unchanged. More important yet, I find 80 or 90 lines in Group A where the unique and possible reading of Hl. involves the pronunciation of *e*'s silent in the other MSS. But I do not think these can offset the other cases. Not only do the latter cases look much less like our reviser's work than the former; but the unique insertion of a syllable or word is necessarily more deliberate and significant than the unique omission, which in most cases is certainly due to accident and carelessness. I can only restate my ineradicable impression, backed up by respectable evidence, that some one concerned with the Harleian version had a keen ear for verse, and a tendency to pronounce in a somewhat more modern way than the original poet.

Another set of unique readings are in singular contrast with the

¹ Cf. A 241, given just above. Here the change makes a 9-syllable line.

last. In a number of cases it looks as if the reviser's metrical rigorousness had led him to take liberties with the English language; usually in order to avoid a 9-syllable or harshly-moving line, sometimes resulting from corruption, he seems to insert -e's where they are grotesquely out of place.

- (A 3941) his name was hoote deynous Symekyn¹
 Symkyn
- (3959) But if he wold be slayn of Symekyn
 Symkyn
- (D 1371) Bet þan þis sompnour knew a leccheour
 knew a sly lecchour
- (D 1392) Artow þan a bayely quod he
 a bailly? Ye quod he²
- (D 1647) After þe text of crist powel and Ion³
 Crist Poul and Iohn
- (E 280) Sche wold haue seyen som what of þat sight
 She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte
- (F 252) Thus seyen þe peple on euery part
 Thus seyn the peple / and drawen hem apart

The inserted e's of *Symekyn*, *leccheour*, *bayely*, *powel*, *seyen* (*visum*) and *seyen*⁴ (*dicunt*), are quite unparalleled and illegitimate, but if pronounced obviously improve the verse. This cavalier treatment of the language, inconceivable in the original writer, does not want for parallels in the procedure of editors, from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth.

It may seem as if these last few arguments contradicted each other. It has been shown that Hl. corrects many 9-syllable lines, and removes many light -e's; yet that in removing the -e's in a few cases it makes 9-syllable lines, and in correcting 9-syllable lines in a few cases inserts light -e's entirely unknown to grammar. In presenting these facts I have simply been doing what is necessary—giving the unique readings of Hl. which are striking and

¹ Cf. p. 9, above. These diminutive proper names seem never to have had an intermediate vowel in Chaucer's day, though a century or two earlier they had (see *N. E. D.*, s. v. *-kin*).

² Cf. the correction made by Cm. Dd.

³ Cf. C 523, "As powel saij" (Hl.); "Paulus" in El., Hn., and Cm. Dd. ("paul," "poule," "Powle" in the other four published MSS.); Zupitza's and Furnivall's 40-odd MSS. have one or another of these latter readings. I find no other case of *Paul* as a dissyllable (see, e. g., *N. E. D.*, s. v.).

⁴ On these two see G. L. Kittredge, *Observations on the Language of Chaucer's Troilus* (Ch. Soc., 1891; issued in 1894), pp. 317, 225.

may be significant. As to my explanation, that they are due to one and the same man, it seems not unlikely. Our reviser was living (as we know people were in the early 15th century) under what was beginning to be a new linguistic dispensation, and did not quite understand the unaccented -e's of the 14th century. Reading carefully, he would pronounce them, but would often misplace them. In copying the *Canterbury Tales*, he would not be looking for metrical troubles, but when he observed them would at times not shrink from touching them up; he would often be inconsistent, and would now be guided by what he thought Chaucer might have written, and now by what he himself would pronounce.¹ This inconsistency seems to me more natural than perfect consistency would be, and to be a plausible explanation of what are at any rate peculiarities which distinguish Hl. from the other MSS. And so much for metrical matters.

§ 4. OTHER PASSAGES OPPOSED TO REVISION BY CHAUCER

First I record certain misunderstandings which are somewhat out of the ordinary.

- (A 307) Sownynge in moral manere was his speche
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche
[The open werres wip woundes al bibles]
(2003) kuttud with bloody knyf and scharp manace
Contek with bloddy knyf and sharpe manace
(B 64) The sorwe of Dido for þe fals Enee
The sword of Dido
(4503) Among his verses how þer was a Cok²
Among hise vers how that ther was a Cok

In many cases the reviser seems to have tried to get rid of or modify strange, unusual or extremely idiomatic locutions, and to substitute simpler ones.

¹ To this there is a complete parallel in the archaistic language of the 16th century *Court of Love*, which favours us with such forms as *kepten ben*, *this mater springen out*, *she helden*, and at the same time almost quite neglects the regular final *e* (Oxford *Chaucer*, VII, lxxvii ff.). The farther from what we may call classical Middle English, the more grotesque the errors.

² Our scribe did not recognize *vers* as a plural; it will be seen how he adapts the rest of the line to the added syllable. A similar case in A 74, *his hors was good*, is paralleled in Cm. Dd.

- (A 179) Ne þat a monk whan he is Cloysterles
 recchelees¹
- (415) he kepte his pacient wondrously wel
 [In houres] pacient a ful greet deel
- (540) Bathe of his owne swynk and his catel
 Bothe of his propre swynk
- (617) A long surcote of blew vppon he hadde
 A long surcote of pers
- (1075) That purgh a wyndow pikke and many a barre
 thikke of many a barre
- (3877) he syngeþ crowyng as a nightyngale
 He syngeth brokkyng² as a nyghtyngale
- (D 1142) ȝit wol þe fuyr as fair and lighte brenne
 as faire lye³ and brenne
- (F 1470) Nay nay quod sche god me so rede & wis
 god helpe me so as wys
- (G 95) Is ioyned by a maner of conioynyng
 manere conioynyng

I give next some not dissimilar cases, of officious correction,
 sometimes commonplace and stupid, missing fine touches.

- [The Reule of seynt maure or of seint Beneyt
 By cause þat it was old and somdel streyt]
- (A 175) This ilke monk leet forby hem pace
 leet olde thynges pace
- (253) For pough a widewe hadde but oo schoo
 hadde noght a sho
- [Ther nas baillif ne herde ne oper hyne]
- (604) That þey ne knewe his sleight and his couyne (!)
 That he ne knew his sleyghte and his couyne (Hn.)
- (612) And haue a þank a cote and eek an hood
 and yet a coote and hood (Hn.)

¹ Professor O. F. Emerson (*Mod. Philol.*, I, 110-5) has shown this to be a perfectly satisfactory reading, and it is retained by Pollard, Mather and Liddell in their texts. To reject it, as Skeat does, seems almost to assume revision by Chaucer. Should it not be retained, not only on the principle of the *durior lectio*, but also because Chaucer would hardly have written line 181 of explanation if he had originally written *cloysterles*? Cf. also Professor G. C. Macaulay, in *Mod. Lang. Review*, IV, 14-5.

² Paris reads *syngith by nyght*.

³ This evidently means *blaze* (A.S. *lig*, the noun); Paris reads "ȝit wil the fyre als fayre lygge and brenne." There are other less striking cases of such substitution in Hl.; as of *hornes* for *bemes* in B 4588, and *townes* for *Thropes* (I, 12). Two more striking cases, *loked* for *kiked* (A 3445) and *knakkes* for *orekes* (A 4051), I omit because the Hl. reading is found also in Harl. 7335.

18 § 4. OTHER PASSAGES OPPOSED TO REVISION BY CHAUCER.

- (663) In daunger he hadde at his owne assise
[The 3onge gurlles of the Diocise]
In daunger hadde he at his owene gise
- (782) But 3e be merye smyteþ of myn heed
. I wol yeue yow myn heed (Hn.)
- (799) Schal han a soper at 3our alþer cost
. at oure aller cost
- (803) I wol my seluen gladly with 3ou ryde
. goodly with yow ryde
- (1340) I noot which hath þe wofullere cheer
. wofuller mester
- (B 46) I can right now non oþer tale seyn¹
. no thrifty tale seyn
- (C 786) For wel I wot þat þis gold is nouȝt oures² (!)
ffor wel ye woot þat al this gold is oures
- (D 880) þer is non oþer incumbent but he
Ther is noon oother Incubus but he
- (H 316) But as I sayd. I am-nought tixted wel³
. textueel

In most of the Harleian peculiarities mentioned so far there is, in spite of this last set, more or less testimony to the rather unusual good-sense and care of the reviser, granted that he was a meddler. Several other passages, besides some already mentioned, show that he must have been a man of some reading.

- (A 993) To do exequies as was þo þe gyse
To doon obsequies
- [Ek wel I wot he sayd myn housebonde]
(D 31) Schuld lete fader and moder and folwe me⁴
. and take me

¹ Our scribe overlooks the allusion to this word *thrifty*, and the repetition of it, in line 1165. The scribes of Pt. and Ln. also thought the word odd, and wrote *trusty*.

² Cp. and Ln. are also edifying, though less so: "þanne mighte we seye þat it were al oures."

³ This may be a sophistication of a corruption in Cp., Pt., Ln., Cm. Dd. and Laud. There are many such cases, where Hl. makes the best of a bad business. A curious case of careless officiousness is in A 2062: "Ther sawȝ I dyane turned in til a tree"; then comes the warning that he means not *Dyane* but *dane*! The scrupulous Hl. is the only one, of the twelve MSS. which I have consulted, to fall into the pit.

⁴ Obviously a confused reminiscence of St. Mark x. 21, 28-9, or St. Luke xviii. 28-9.

(D 2289) As wel as euclide or elles protholome
As wel as Euclide or Protholomee¹

(F 95) That Ewen with his olde curtesye
[They he come aȝein out of fayrre]
That Gawayn

I find evidence of the handiwork of some particularly intelligent person in several unique lines which stand in place of genuine lines. These are few, and are pretty certainly not genuine revisions, but have every appearance of having been supplied in place of lost lines. When one considers how bad, in style and verse, such lines are apt to be, the excellence of these is striking.

- (A 305) Al þat he spak it was of heye prudence
And that was seyð in forme and reuerence
- (2249) And ȝe be venus þe goddes of loue²
That if yow list I shal wel haue my loue
[Al in a kirtel of a fyn wachet]
- (3322) Schapen with goores in þe newe get
ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set
[The Constable and dame hermegylð his wyf]
- (B 534) To telle ȝou playne in peynes boþe were
Were payens and that ctree euery where
- (F 516) [Doþ so his sermonys and his obseruaunce]
vnder subtil colour and aqueyntaunce
[Dooth so hise cerymonyes and obeisañces]
And kepeth in semblant alle hise obseruañces
- (591-2) And resoun wold eek þat he moste go : for his honour
Wher-for I wold not ben aȝein his honour
And resoñ wolde eek that he moste go
ffor his honour as ofte it happeth so

Here there is some strange confusion, but in the other cases, which are all that I have found,³ there is evidence of unusual care

¹ HL. 1758 and Ln. have *Ptholome*; the other eight MSS. consulted are essentially the same as El., all of course misunderstanding the initial *p* as a common abbreviation. The correct reading makes a 9-syllable line (unless Chaucer means that the illiterate Sumner gave the word four syllables), which HL. corrects; so our scribe clearly knew that the word has only three syllables. But the immediate scribe of HL. relapsed into the same inevitable blunder as most of the MSS. On his shoulders also we must perhaps unload such crude and ignorant blunders as the astronomical ones in F 1280, 1283, and that in A 2062 (already mentioned). The correction of a 9-syllable line at E 1364 makes a curious blunder.

² Evidently borrowed from A 2440; it is line 2250 which was omitted, and our scribe put the substituted line on the wrong side of 2249, thus altering the construction.

³ A 1602 is merely a careless echoing of 1592 and A 2656 of 2548; C 326 (a reminiscence of B 1642 in the better MSS.) reads the same in Paris, HL. 7335 and Addit. 35286 (out of Laud 600); B 1761 reads the same in Laud and Addit. 35286; and C 319-320 (a reminiscence of B 4603-4) in Paris, HL. 7335 and Addit. (out of Laud).

and sense. Yet none of them, except possibly A 3322, could be regarded as revisions by Chaucer.¹

Similar evidence of care is found in the fact that Hl. or its parent was considerably more careful than the seven other printed MSS. to leave a blank where a line has been dropped;² as is indicated by the number of lines added "in a later hand." MS. Camb. Gg is next most careful, but here, we are told, the later hand is often writing on an erasure. The following are striking cases of the sort in Hl. In C 717 the rhyme-word is erroneously changed, so that the couplet looks like the fragments of two couplets; accordingly the MS. leaves a blank line after each of the lines 717 and 718. G 1283-4 are added in a later hand; was the original omission due to the fact that this is one of the very few passages in the whole poem of a line or more for which there are alternative and about equally good readings, so that we have here another case of scribal collation? The most interesting case of blanks left is in one of the most puzzling passages in the whole poem, *Pars. Prolog.* 3-11.

- The sonne . . .
 . . . nas nouȝt to my sight
 4 Degrees [nyne and twenty as in hight]
 Ten on þe Clokke it was as I gesse
 For enleuen foote or litil more or lesse
 My schadow was at þilk tyme of þe ȝere
 Of which feet as my lengþe parted were
 In [sixe] feet equal of proporcioun
 Ther-with þe mones exaltacioun
 11 In mena libra alway gan ascende

The bracketed words are by a somewhat later hand, written in a much lighter ink on blanks left by the original scribe. The normal readings (I have examined altogether 42 MSS.) are substantially as above except in line 11.³ Now the puzzles in the

¹ C 82, 291-2, 346 and 926, D 2224, and G 1283-4 are cases where, in one or more of the other published MSS., there is an excellent secondary or alternative reading.

² Such losses were evident, of course, because they disturb the rhyme-scheme.

³ *Ten* (or a corruption, such as *than*) is the reading in l. 5 of the S. T. MSS., of Camb. Dd., and of MSS. Lichf., Rawl. 149 and 223, New Coll., Trin. Coll. 49, Bodl. 414 (?), Hatton, Addit. 35286, Arch. Seld., Laud 600, Camb. Mm., Trin. Coll. 3. 15 (?) and 3. 3, Linc., Hl. 1758 and 7333, Roy. Coll. Phys., Roy. 18 C, Egerton 2726. The same list, with the addition of Christ Ch., Addit. 5140, and Camb. Ii, and the subtraction of Laud 600 and Roy. 18 C, read in l. 11 *I meene Libra*, or an equivalent. In l. 5, Camb. Ii reads *There*, and Christ Ch. and Addit. 5140 read *four*; in l. 11, Royal 18 C reads *In mene libra*, and Laud 600 only (which we know is closely allied to Hl. 7334) has the Hl. reading *In mena libra*. The whole passage is lacking in Rawl.

passage are three: the declining sun, though the immediately preceding¹ *Manciple's Prologue* and *Tale* indicate (H 16) early morning; the mention of *ten* (l. 5) in spite of the declining sun; and the calling *Libra* the exaltation of the moon,² which is incorrect astrology. Now neither the first nor the second hand in Hl. does anything to solve these puzzles (as MSS. Christ Church and Addit. 5140 do); nor does the first scribe seem quite to have realized where the trouble lay.³ But the main thing is that he or a predecessor saw some one had blundered, and tried to leave an opening for correction. It may seem as if this careful scribe must have been the actual scribe of our Hl.; but clearly the blank might have been inherited from the parent MS. It does seem, however, that the careful scribe could not be far back.

This is all the evidence of a positive and detailed character which I find against attributing the peculiarities of MS. Harleian 7334 to Chaucer. We have found that, while a few of them are good enough to have come from the poet, there are a far larger number of cases where the readings can hardly be Chaucerian, and yet are greatly unlike ordinary scribal variants. These seem to justify us in postulating a critical scribe whom we may call the reviser; and once we have him, it is inevitable to attribute to him all the striking peculiarities of the MS., good as well as bad. The hypothesis that one and the same MS. contains revisions by Chaucer and also by some one else is too unlikely. The only way in which one could entertain such a possibility is to hold that our careful and interested reviser sought far and wide for copies of the work, or parts of it, which contained very minute and inconspicuous

141, Laud 739, Bodl. 686, Barl. 20, Hl. 1239 and 7335, Paris, Sloane 1685 and 1686, Roy. 17 D, Addit. 25718 and Sion College. For the reading *ten*, this makes 27 MSS. against 3, and for *I mene libra* also 27 against 3. Therefore Dr. Skeat, in accepting the reading *fourre*, though that fits the sense, is flying in the face of the MSS.; his remarks (V, 444) and Tyrwhitt's (ed. of 1775, vol. iv, p. 186) are decidedly misleading. I do not see how we can very well do otherwise than attribute these strange readings to the carelessness and confusion that Chaucer often gets into, especially in cases like this (cf. p. 6, above).

¹ I do not see how it can be questioned that H and I really form an inseparable group, or that E and F do. All the MSS. which I have examined (two-thirds of those extant) make both facts quite plain; so what Chaucer has joined together let not his Society put asunder. Dividing B, as I believe we should, into two, we shall have, therefore, eight groups instead of nine.

² Cf. the writer's *Devel. and Chronol. of Chaucer's Works* (Ch. Soc.), p. 184.

³ There is a little variation among the MSS. in l. 4, but none, I believe, in l. 9; I doubt if the leaving of the blanks was due to variety of readings.

alterations by the poet, and in his text included these along with his own.¹ Clearly, this possibility can never be disproved. But its usefulness is destroyed by the impossibility of knowing which peculiarities we are to attribute to Chaucer; and its likelihood by certain considerations now to follow.

§ 5. GENERAL EVIDENCE AGAINST REVISION BY CHAUCER.

We come here to negative and general arguments against the genuineness of the revisions, and these are both abundant and cogent. The present writer believes that all the probability and evidence are against any complete or even extensive arranging, putting together, or publication of the work during Chaucer's lifetime; and *a fortiori* against the existence of anything like two versions. Most of the arguments bearing on these subjects cannot be entered into now. I must confine myself here to negative evidence based on the Harleian MS. itself.

In the first place, there are no significant additions or omissions.² The only additions which I find³ are four curious couplets in *Summ. T.*, after D 2004, 2012, 2037 and 2048 respectively; they are almost faultless in verse, but cannot possibly be by Chaucer, and one hesitates to attribute them to our reviser. Now nothing is more unlikely than that Chaucer should go through a whole text, or any considerable part of it, with his eye on details of verse and style, and never be moved to omit, or especially to add. In this connection it is hardly necessary to refer to his procedure in revising the *Troilus* and the prologue to the *Legend*. In a careful scribe such conservatism would be perfectly natural. Hl. occupies no peculiar position, but goes with the majority, in regard to the

¹ So far as one can see, this appears to be about Professor Skeat's view; see p. 2, above.

² One single case of omission may seem striking. In the so-called *Shipm. Prol.* 1179, the person who profanely insists on telling the next tale is the Sumner (as I have found in four other MSS., Rawl. 223, Royal 17 D, Linc., Roy. Coll. Phys.; this will supplement Miss Hammond, *Bibl. Manual*, p. 277), instead of the Shipman (as in modern editions, but in no MS. except Seld.), or of the Squire (as in all the other MSS. examined which contain the passage). Now Hl. omits, thereby breaking up a couplet, the last 5 lines of the *Sh. Prol.*, where among other things the speaker declares the tale shall not be learned, for he has but little Latin in his maw; did the reviser remember, possibly, the Sumner's fondness for Latin (A, 638)?

³ Or Dr. Furnivall (*Harleian 7334*, p. vii). These couplets are not in any other published MS., nor in Laud 600, Hl. 7335, Paris, or Addit. 35286.

few passages¹ which are found in only a few MSS., and which, it might be plausibly maintained, may represent a slight genuine revision of some parts of the work. It is also particularly suggest-

¹ These are important enough for some to be given in detail, since I have discovered new authorities for them. A 252 *b* and *c*, hitherto known only in Hengwrt, I have also found in Roy. Coll. of Phys., Laud 739, Christ Ch., Trin. Coll. 3.3, and HL 1758 (in this last only the first word of each line is inserted, in a hand a century or two later):

And yaf a certeyn ferme for the gaunt [*sic*]
 Noon of his bretheren coom in his haunt (Christ Church)
 And yaf a certayn ferme • for the graunt
 That non of his brethern—com in his haunt (Royal Coll. of Phys.)
 And zaf a certen ferme for the gaunte [*sic*]
 None of hys bretheryn cam there in hys haunte (Laud 739)
 And yaf a certain ferme for the graunt
 Non of his bretheren can [*sic*] there in his haunt (Trin. Coll. 3.3).

Frankl. T. 1455-6, 1493-8, hitherto known only in Ellesmere, are also (with a Latin gloss) in Addit. 35286, as follows:

The same thing I seye of bilyea
 Of Rodogone and ek valeria
 Perauenture an heap of yow y wis
 Wol holden him a lewde man in this
 That he wol put his wif in Jeptie
 Herkeneth the tale er ye upon hir crie
 She may haue bettre fortune than yow semeth
 And whan that ye han the tale demeth [*sic*]

The third passage is *Wife of Bath's Prol.*, 44 *b-g*,

Of whiche I have piked oute the beste
 Booth of hire nether purs / and of hire cheste
 Dyu's scoles maken dyu's clerkes
 And dyu's praktyke in many sondry werkys •
 maketh þe þite man sikirly
 Of .v. housboudes :coleying am I (Christ Church).

I have found this passage, sometimes in a poor form (as above, which may show that Chaucer inserted it in a crowded and illegible form), in Seld., New Coll., Ch. Ch., Cm. Dd, Cm. II, Trin. Coll. 3. 15, Roy. 17 D, Egerton 2726 and Sion; the early part, or all, of *W. B. Prol.* is missing in five MSS.; in the 28 other MSS. which I have examined this passage is absent. According to Furnivall (*Camb. MS. Dd.*, II, vi) it is "also in Mr. Laurence Hodson's MSS." Of the genuineness of all these passages it seems to me there cannot be the smallest doubt; or that they ought all to be restored to the text. It is a singular consequence of Professor Skeat's method of forming a text that, while he includes the passages in the *Frankl. T.*, known to him in a single MS., he half-excludes that in the *Prologue*, known to him in one almost as good, which he now considers more authoritative, and excludes that in *W. B. Prol.*, known to him in three MSS. I have shown three or four times as much MS. authority (so far as this is an argument) for the two latter passages as for the former; and on the inclusion in the text of the last passage may refer to my *Development and Chronology of Chaucer's Works* (Ch. Soc., 1907), p. 201. In much the same category stand a few of the links, lacking in HL as in the majority of the MSS. The *Nun's Priest's Epilogue* is known only in 8 MSS., Cm. Dd, Add. 5140, Dev., Egerton 2726 (formerly Haistwell), Egerton 2864 (formerly Ingilby), Ch. Ch., Roy. 17 D and Hodson 39 (see Skeat, IV, 289; Zupitza, *Specimens*, I, v; Furnivall, 2nd Supplement to *Specimens*, p. 75; Ch. Soc.'s edition of HL 7334, p. 694; Miss Hammond, *Mod. Philol.*, III, 174, and *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, pp. 170,

ive that the tales of the Cook and Squire¹ are present in their fragmentary form. Would Chaucer in revising have done nothing to them?² Moreover, Hl. does nothing toward supplying in the *Prologue* descriptions of the Second Nun and the Nun's Priests. This deficiency and the inconsistency between the "wel nyne and twenty" and the actual number of the pilgrims (31 including Chaucer) point to a change of plan at some time during the composition of the poem. A thorough revision would have been just the time to remedy them. Again, no attempt is made in Hl. to supply any of the links which are lacking between the several groups. Further, the presence in Hl., as well as the others, of the so-called *Retractations*³ at the end of the *Parson's Tale* (I, 1081-92) seems to me a strong indication that the poem underwent no thorough revision at Chaucer's hand. The poet asks Heaven's mercy for having written "þe Tales of Caunturbury alle pilke pat sounen in to synne." Other worldly or free-spoken poets besides Chaucer have been attacked toward the end of their lives by an acute inflammation of the conscience. It is not an extreme example of human inconsistency to have appended this declaration of repentance to the very manuscripts which contained the "merry tales"

247, 283, who errs here, as at other times in her statistics). It is surely genuine, but might easily be lost because it hooks on to nothing at the end. Another such case is the so-called *Host-stanza*, which, doubtless, was Chaucer's original end-link for the *Clerk's Tale*, meant to be replaced by the present *Merchant's Prologue*; it is printed by Skeat in a note (IV, 424); his remark as to its position is misleading, since it practically always occurs, if at all, just after the Clerk's *Envoy* (he appears to have been misled by Furnivall, *S. T.*, 477; see also the edition of Cm. Dd, p. 274, for the correct position). Of the 42 MSS. mentioned earlier (see pp. 3, 4, above), it is in 17, El., Hn., Cm., Cm. Dd, Seld., Barlow 20, Bodl. 686, New C., Ch. Ch., T. C. 3. 15 (between *Pard.* and *Frankl.*), Linc., Hl. 1758, 7333, R. Coll. Phys., Roy. 18 C, Add. 5140, Egert. 2726; and is not in the other 25. It is also in MSS. Naples and Hodson 39, according to Furnivall (*Specimens*, VI, 80, and *Second Supplement*, p. 74), and in Egerton 2864 (Ingilby), according to Miss Hammond (*Bibliogr.*, 303), who has most kindly written me that it is not in Laud 739. May I state, for the possible convenience of students, that this present note contains, to the best of my belief, the fullest and most accurate statement to be found anywhere in print as to the occurrence of the six passages mentioned in it?

¹ The former lacks the last eight lines, which makes a better stopping-place; the latter part of *Sq. T.* has been cut out, but was originally there, as is proved by the number of pages lost.

² Hl. also retains the half-dozen genuine words ("And if thou take a wyf"—) at E 1305 which gave rise to no less than nine probably spurious versions of the rest of the couplet in 26 MSS. See *S. T. in loco*, and *Introd.*, pp. 70 ff.; Skeat, V, 354-5; and the writer's *Development and Chronology*, p. 209. Ten of our 42 scribes wisely omitted the couplet; Hl. gives a particularly bad version, the same as that in Bodl. 686, Paris, and Hl. 7335.

³ That they are genuine it seems difficult to doubt. The matter is closely connected with the question when and how the *Tales* were published.

repented of, so that they were all given to the world together, as I believe, after the poet's death. But to have added it to the original version long enough before his death to have allowed time for a revised version to come into existence, yet to have left it in that as well, would seem inexpressibly weak-minded and futile.

Though I have called attention earlier to a very few blunders which Hl. corrects, the inconsistency mentioned above as to the number of the pilgrims is only one of a much larger number¹ which it ignores; including such glaring ones as the "unworthy sone of Eve" in the *Second Nun's Prologue* (G, 62), the attribution of female sex to the swashbuckler Shipman (B, 1202, etc.), and the representing of the rude person in the so-called *Shipman's Prologue* (B, 1179) who interrupts the Parson, and is about to tell a story, as the Sumner, though he is introduced again later, and though what actually follows is the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*. Whatever is the true explanation of the mysteries of Group B, and whether or not we accept this reading as Chaucer's original intention, none of the four other MSS.² which give it can very well contain a revised edition. Such errors as all these would be less likely to be detected and corrected by even a careful and daring critic than by the original writer.

A somewhat similar but stronger argument is the presence in Hl., after the unfinished *Cook's Tule*, of the non-Chaucerian *Tale of Gamelyn*. Of the 47 MSS. known to me, or on which I have data, it is present in 19 and absent (or inserted later) in 28.³ The probable and familiar explanation of its occurrence is that Chaucer, purposing to work it over, had it among his papers, and that it got into the *Tales* after his death;⁴ and its presence has important bearings on the history of the composition and publication of the work. The point here is that it is incredible that this spurious poem should be found in a version of the *Tales* revised by Chaucer,

¹ The evidences which Lounsbury finds (*Studies in Chaucer*, III, 317-8; cf. also F, 401-5) of want of care and revision in the second part of the *Squire's Tale*, as compared with the first, are found in Hl. as well as in the other MSS. So are certain small defects in the *Knight's Tale* (see my *Development and Chronology*, pp. 69-70). In contrast with Chaucer's indifference to minute accuracy, it is interesting to note that in the entire *Divina Commedia* Dr. Moore finds at most seven inconsistencies, all trifling (*Textual Criticism of the Divina Commedia*, Cambridge, 1889, pp. xxxvii ff.).

² Cf. p. 22, above.

³ See *S. T.*, *Introd.*, and Zupitza's *Specimens* (Ch. Soc., 1890), I, xvi, and *Second Supplement* (1900). In Egerton 2726 (formerly Haistwell) it is inserted in a very late (about 18th century) hand.

⁴ Cf. Skeat, III, 399.

as well as in nearly half the MSS. of the earlier version; he certainly would not have left it there, and it is very unlikely to have intruded itself twice.¹

The next, and a very important, negative argument is the arrangement of HL. At the outset I must state that I am so far from begging the question of a single authentic arrangement that I do not believe Chaucer ever put the poem together at all. But I do not see how we can doubt that he would have studied out the matter carefully had he lived to finish the work; that the mention of times and seasons, of places along the road, and of tales already told, indicates that he bore the subject in mind more or less all along; and that if we can devise an arrangement without serious inconsistencies, we are justified in preferring it to a self-contradictory one, and in accepting it as coming near Chaucer's intention, even though the one be the arrangement of no manuscript, and the other that of many. To do otherwise, it seems to me, attributes to the poet a slovenliness, a carelessness, and even a lack of seriousness about his work quite beyond anything else we can attribute to him. If all the arrangements of the MSS. are illogical, it seems as easy to reject all as all but one. Such a logical arrangement as I have mentioned can be devised,² but it is certainly not that of HL. The arrangement of HL is unique among the 47 MSS. on which I have data,³ differing from all others in at once keeping Group E-F intact, and putting Group G (Second Nun and Canon's Yeoman)

¹ The question will at once suggest itself whether *Gamelyn* in HL shows any signs of revision, such as appear in the genuine tales. It does not. HL offers much the best text, as Skeat indicates (IV, 645, note), especially metrically, but there is nothing to show that this is not the original text. Clearly, our reviser would not bother with what he saw was not Chaucer's work, just as he bothered little with Chaucer's two prose tales.

² And is pretty much that of modern editions, which lacks definitiveness only in that, Group C containing no note of Chaucer's intention, we cannot be sure where he would have put it had he arranged the poem at the stage it had reached when he died. The only inconsistency is that the Squire tells us it is prime (F, 73) when it ought to be much later in the day; for it is impossible that a day began with "Group F" (see p. 21, above, note), and highly improbable, for various reasons, that one began with E or D. I may refer in this connection to my article in the *Publ. of the Mod. Lang. Assoc. of America*, xxi, 478-485, on the duration of the Canterbury pilgrimage. But this inconsistency is pretty much an exception which proves the rule, for this note of time stands within an unfinished and perhaps uncorrected tale, and not in a link, to which we should naturally go to discover the *scenario* of the work.

³ Derived from *S.T.*, *Introd.*; from Zupitza's *Specimens*, I, xvi, and 2nd Supplement (MS. Hodson); and from my own examination of 34 MSS., of which 6 (Bodley 414, Paris, Lincoln, Lichfield, Addit. 35286, and Royal Coll. of Phys.) are not in the *S.T.* table. On some of the problems connected

between Group E-F (Clerk to Franklin) and C (Physician and Pardoner).¹ This arrangement is much better than that of most of the MSS., which are so preposterously arranged. But it is inferior to that of MSS. of the Ellesmere-type, differing from it in putting Group G thus early instead of just before the Manciple. The main point, however, is that it cannot possibly be correct.² It differs from the arrangement of the editions, which, however, is not that of a single MS., and may be not what Chaucer intended, in three respects. In dividing Group B, it agrees with all the MSS. except the Selden, and it could not easily be proved wrong; or in putting Group C just before the second part of B. The conclusive thing is that while in B 3116 the pilgrims are near Rochester, and in G 556 at Boughton-under-Blean, some twenty-two miles farther on, the latter passage comes nearly four thousand lines earlier than the former. The chief confusions in the *Canterbury Tales* are in regard to arrangement; Hl. gives no help. Of course it is conceivable that Chaucer might have gone through the poem while the MS. was still in separate fragments; but may it not be a significant fact that the arrangement of Hl. should be both unique, among the 47 MSS. which have been analyzed, and not possibly correct?

My final argument is that from genealogy. If Hl. all the way through contains revisions made by Chaucer himself which are to be found in no other MS., beyond a doubt it ought to stand completely apart from the others in regard to other readings, small errors, omissions, etc.; in other words, it ought to be on a line by itself in the genealogy, since it must then have had an independent descent from Chaucer's original MS. Occasional contamination might be possible, but not constant parallelism. Now, although it is premature, and perhaps will always be unwise, to lay down the law about the genealogy of the MSS., it is certain that Hl. stands in no such solitary state, as anybody who is at all familiar with the MSS. will admit and could easily prove. Though its

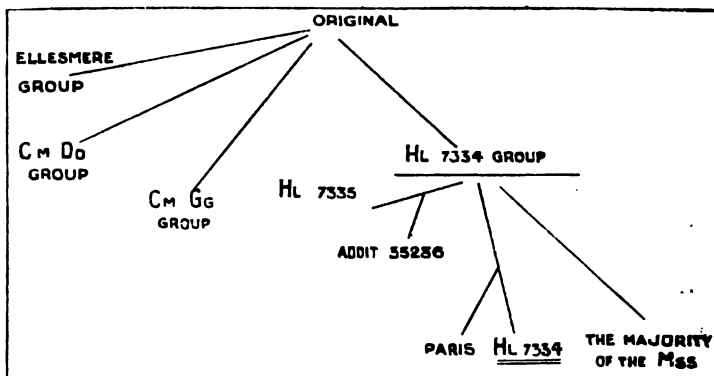
with the arrangement of the poem, see an article by George Shipley in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, X, 260-79, and Miss Hammond's *Bibliography*, pp. 158-167.

¹ Except for certain unique eccentricities, MS. Laud 600 is the nearest in essentials of arrangement, i. e. it is the only other MS. which has the order F (entire), G, C; its connection with Hl. is not borne out by Zupitza's tables, but I have found many common readings which serve as evidence, as I have remarked elsewhere from time to time (cf. p. 4, above).

² The order is Groups A (followed by *Gamelyn*), B¹ (Man of Law, followed by the so-called *Shipman's Prologue*), D, E, F, G, C, B² (from the *Shipm. T.* to the *N. P. T.*), H, I.

affiliations among the *S. T.* MSS. are not constant, there are any number of cases where HL has an absurd reading in common with one or more of the others; and it is abundantly evident from these, as well as from the presence of *Gamelyn* and other facts, that HL's ancestry diverged from that of others of the *S. T.* MSS. at a somewhat advanced point in the MS.-tradition. This is clearly impossible if its peculiarities are due to revision by Chaucer.

The researches and reprints of Zupitza, Koch, Liddell and Furnivall for the *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale*¹ will make this argument particularly conclusive. Their results have been painstakingly and unfavourably criticized by one or two scholars in private, but after some investigation of all the evidence it seems to me that much of the results will stand.² In Liddell's graphic representation³ of Zupitza's results, HL appears as follows:



The near relationship of HL to the three MSS. with which it is grouped⁴ may easily be verified by consulting Zupitza's extracts from these MSS. It is borne out by agreements which I have

¹ *Specimens* (Ch. Soc., 1890-1900).

² The worst point is that they have not allowed enough for contamination; e.g., in a large scriptorium a scribe might, for a single copy, be given on different days different MSS. to copy from. HL cannot be throughout as independent of the left-hand groups as the table would indicate. On the same difficulty in studying the MSS. of the *Divina Commedia*, see Dr. Moore's *Textual Criticism*, p. xliii. In his *Prolegomena* and Prefatory Note the textual critic of Chaucer, as Miss Hammond remarks, will find much to interest, perhaps even to instruct him.

³ See *Specimens*, IV, xlviii. I supplement from *Specimens*, V, x. (Koch's Introduction).

⁴ I have found, as I have stated earlier, suggestive resemblances also between HL and Laud 600 (see p. 4, above), which Zupitza lands far off somewhere on the lower line. The rights of this matter are one of the unsolved problems.

found elsewhere in the work ; in fact, in common with them alone Hl. has some readings which look not unlike our reviser's work, and which had been included as evidence in this essay until these MSS. had been consulted. Yet the readings which for years have given Hl. its anomalous celebrity are found in none of these three. Two facts, therefore, are plain : that the peculiarities of Hl. are not primitive, and that it is very far from having had a wholly independent descent from Chaucer's original MS.

But from the Zupitza *Specimens* we can derive still more striking evidence. As I have said earlier, I have compared all passages quoted from C 287-968 not only with the *S. T.*, but with the 45 MSS. given in the *Specimens*, which makes 52 in all (including Hl.), being practically all in existence which contain the *Pardoner*. Sometimes a Harleian reading (not used, of course, in this article), unique as compared with the *S. T.*, is paralleled elsewhere, sometimes, perhaps, by mere coincidence ; in four of these cases out of five the agreement is with one or more of the four MSS. (Laud 600, Paris, Addit. 35286, Harl. 7335) with which has been collated all the material used in this work. But in the other cases the Hl. reading proves after comparison to be really unique. In other words, this discovery makes us in a measure independent of the fact that for most of the poem we have been able to compare Hl. with but eleven other MSS. ; it shows that, just as for the greater part of Group C, so probably for the rest of the work, almost all of its seeming peculiarities are really unique. This confirms the impression of the uniqueness of Hl. derived from comparing it with the four MSS. which seemed most likely to disprove its uniqueness. It being out of the question to collate all of Hl. with all the 60-odd MSS., we have compared all of Hl. with a carefully selected group of the MSS., and a carefully selected part of Hl. with practically all of the MSS. ; and we have found, where we could make the test, that practically always, when Hl. could run the gauntlet of the eleven MSS., it could run the gauntlet of all in existence. The results of all this, the proof of the intimate relationships of Hl. and yet of its uniqueness, are highly important, for they can mean just one thing, viz. :—That the revisions appeared, at the earliest, in the third or fourth MS.-generation, and cannot be due to Chaucer. This confirms the view, also supported by the fact that Hl. seems to be among the very oldest of the MSS., that the "revisions" were made in the immediate parent of Hl. ; and that,

although it is beautifully written, "the Harleian MS. is a careless copy of this manuscript." I quote Mr. Pollard's words, for he and I are agreed on this point, and differ only as to who the reviser was.¹

§ 6. IN CONCLUSION.

After all the readings of various kinds which have been discussed, there still remain a few which fall into none of the other categories, and which are peculiarly interesting; those cases, namely, in which we irresistibly feel that Hl. has the only right reading (sometimes with the same or a similar reading in a few other MSS.), and that the MSS. which differ, Ellesmere and all, are wrong. These few cases follow:

- [Don make an auter and an oratory]
 (A 1906) And westward in þe mynde and in memory
 (Pt.) And on þe westward side in memorie²
 (A 2037) As is depeynted in [*sic*] sterres aboue
 (Hn.) As is depeynted in the Sertres³ aboue
 (A 2385) whan þat pou vsedest þe gret bewte
 Whan þat thou vsedest the beautee⁴

¹ One possible objection may be mentioned, since it seems to have struck Mr. Pollard (*Globe Chaucer*, p. xxix). Might not one of the third or fourth generation of MSS., after the whole work had been given to the world, have come into Chaucer's hands, and been touched up by him? There is, as I have said earlier, a great weight of probability and evidence, not to be adduced here, against the idea that the work was ever put together and published before Chaucer's death, especially long enough before for him thus to have seen his children's children. And secondly, though this explanation might do for a small proportion of the unique readings of Hl., it would not do for most of them.

² On this I have collated 34 unpublished MSS. (see p. 4, above), making 42 in all. The passage is lacking in Sion and Rawl. 141; Trin. Coll. 49 (similarly Addit. 35286) reads (very well) "and on the gate westward in memorie"; Camb. II reads "On the Weste gate in memorie"; the other 36 have substantially the Pt. reading or a corruption. The common reading might be accepted if we could allow a hiatus; but such a hiatus seems hardly possible. It will be noticed that the first three passages quoted in this paragraph are all from *Kn. T.* It is barely possible that the fact is due to collation of Hl. with a separate MS. of this tale, which there is good reason to believe circulated somewhat before the work was published as a whole.

³ Liddell (*The Prologue*, etc., N. Y. 1902, p. 169) completely explains this reading; the *t* was "accidentally dropped in the original copy, and then added above with the caret between the two *r*'s instead of between the *s* and the *e*: ser^tres." This must have happened very early, for 35 MSS. have something like a dozen variations on this, the most extraordinary being *sere trees* (Sloane 1686)! The passage is lacking in Sion and Rawl. 141. But Christ Ch., Bodley 414, Addit. 35286, Hl. 7335 read *sterrys*, *sterres*, *sterris*, like our Hl. It would be strange, with so many MSS. and readings, that some of them should not hit on the original.

⁴ Of course *beautee* has but two syllables. As a 9-syllable line this is

The other case is one of arrangement; a couplet which only in HL. comes in intelligibly in the *Friar's Tale* (D, 1307-8), in all the other MSS.¹ comes in strangely a few lines earlier in the *Friar's Prologue* (after 1294).

- (D 1300-10) [An erchedeken
 . . . boldely did execucioun
 In punyschyng of fornicacioun

 Of contractes and of lak of sacraments]
 And eek of many anoþer cryme
 which nedip not to reherse at þis tyme
 [Of vsur and of Symony also
 But certes lecchours did he grettest woo]
- (1293 ff.) [I shal hym tellen which a greet honour
 It is to be a flaterynge lymytour]
 And of many another manere cryme
 Which nedeth nat rehercen for this tyme
 [And his office I shal hym telle ywis]

None of these passages indicates revision by Chaucer simply because he can hardly have been responsible for the ordinary reading. The first three cases, it will be seen from my notes, are emended by other MSS. also, the second and third (probably by coincidence) in the same way as by HL. What the original reading was in the first and third passages it is impossible to be sure; in the second and fourth it is hard to doubt that HL. restores the original conditions. The misplaced couplet comes in rather ill in either place, and sounds rather like a later addition; since its two positions are only fourteen lines apart (allowing two lines for rubrics), the combined height of which just equals the length of the couplet, it may have been written by Chaucer lengthwise in the margin, and have been inserted at the wrong end by the first copyists. Our rather capable "reviser" was surely clever enough to make the restoration.

This finishes the evidence which it seems worth while to present. I have not seemed, I trust, to underestimate the difficulty

almost too bad (but cf. pp. 10, 11, above). 35 MSS. have substantially the EL. reading; the passage is out in 4 MSS.; Cm. II reads "When thou useste [*sic*] the grete beaute"; Add. 35286 reads "what tyme that thou usedest the beaute."—Another passage, also in *Kn. T.*, which might be added is A 1637, "Tho chaungen gan here colour . . ." (The *S. T.* MSS. read "To chaungen . . .", a construction, "gan to chaungen," unusual, if not unknown, in Chaucer's works.) MS. Egerton 2726 (for Cm. Dd) also has a reading better than that in the *S. T.*

¹ *I. e.* in 37 MSS., including even the allied MSS., Paris, HL. 7335, Laud 600, Add. 35286; the passage is lacking in HL. 1239 and 7333, Addit. 25718 and Sl. 1685.

of this question of revision by Chaucer. The gist of the argument has been that, while there are some few peculiar readings in HL which it is very tempting to attribute to Chaucer, nevertheless, if it represents a thorough revision by him, his procedure in other respects is quite unaccountable, and there is a much larger number of apparent emendations which it is equally difficult to attribute to him and to an ordinary scribe. Clearly, some one after Chaucer's death undertook to improve the text of the *Canterbury Tales*. The Harleian MS., one feels sure, represents a non-Chaucerian revision; is it likely that it represents a Chaucerian one as well? Therefore one can hardly accept Dr. Skeat's view that HL contains "some emendations from an 'inspired' source." All its peculiarities may conceivably not have come from the same hand, and some crude blunders may be unloaded on the scribe who wrote this identical copy; but it is difficult to pick and choose. Since HL is one of the oldest MSS. of all,¹ and these peculiar readings are not in such evidently allied MSS. as the Paris, we cannot carry them far back. The conclusion seems inevitable that most of its important peculiarities are due to some devoted student of Chaucer, well-educated, intelligent and rather sensitive, but somewhat pedantic and liable to lapses of attention and even good sense. When we consider the popularity which Chaucer doubtless enjoyed at his death, and the fact that pious regard to the *ipsissima verba* was unknown in the Middle Ages, it is not so surprising that somebody should have been found to do him the doubtful service of "tagging his verses"; nor, when we consider the state in which the work was left, that sometimes the reviser should have been able to make improvements. In establishing a text, therefore, if these conclusions are sound, HL. should be used, if at all, only with the greatest suspicion; and it cannot be used to prove complete, or even partial revision, by Chaucer, of the *Canterbury Tales*.²

¹ "Perhaps, by a few years, the oldest": Furnivall, Forewords to the Ch. Soc. edition (p. vi); cf. Skeat IV, viii ("one of the oldest").

² The more Chaucer's text is studied, the more likely such an explanation as the above may appear. In many scribes we find a highly and sometimes intelligently critical attitude towards the text. In *Pars. Prol.* 5 (cf. p. 20), whether Chaucer wrote *ten of the clocke* or *four*, the other reading was an attempt to reconcile the passage with the time indicated by the preceding lines or by the *Manc. Prol.* In *Reeve's Prol.* 3906 (cf. p. 5, above) various MSS. put the hour later than the correct reading, doubtless in order to help out the time. To pass over many other instances, HL. 7333 affords one or two excellent cases of collation or criticism by a scribe. It may be remembered that *Monk's Tale* 3565-3562 (the lives of the two Pedros, of Bernabò Visconti, and of Ugolino) comes in most MSS., no doubt correctly (see my *Devel. and*

Chronol., 170-2), about the middle of the tale; but in EL and allied MSS. at the end (cf. also Miss Hammond, *Bibliogr.*, 241-3). Now HL 7333 puts them in *both* positions. The shifting of this passage is only one of a number of peculiarities in EL and its congeners which led Bradshaw and Furnivall to call them "edited texts" (*Temp. Pref.*, Ch. Soc., pp. 23-4), the "editor" being another than Chaucer. When, in some late MSS. (see *S. T. Introd.*), Group E-F was split into four parts, the links were made over to fit the tales to their new neighbours; elsewhere, too, links are made over, and even supplied. Two MSS. of *L. G. W.* correct Chaucer's curious blunder in l. 1966 (*Athenes* for *Crete*; see Lowes, *Publ. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XX, 808). Professor Bilderbeck (*Chaucer's Leg. of G. W.*, London, 1902; pp. 55, 56, 58) shows that in *L. G. W.* MS. Seld. and others make changes, which even he does not ascribe to Chaucer, in order to secure supposedly better lines; and one MS. even consciously modernizes diction and grammar, as happens now and then in other mediæval texts. Miss Hammond (*Chicago Univ. Decennial Public.*, First Series, VII, 23) finds scribal corrections for metre in MS. Cm. Gg. of the *Parl. of Fowls*; she declares that an accurate text of *P. F.* will increase the number of 9-syllable lines, which the scribes therefore must have tended to correct (p. 24). Caxton tells us that his first edition of the *C. T.* was regarded by one of his customers as so incorrect that he had to print another from better MSS. Of the highly critical attitude of some of the *C. T.* scribes, the Paris MS. affords diverting examples; it omits the two prose tales, *Melibeus* clearly on purpose, and breaks off very early in *Sq. T.*, *Can. Yeom. T.*, and *Monk's T.*, with very uncomplimentary remarks, such as "*Ista fabula est valde absurda*"; "*Maior pars istius fabule est pretermisssa usque huc quia termini sunt valde absurdi*" (cf. Halfmann's dissertation on this MS., Kiel, 1898). "Already in the fifteenth century," to quote Miss Hammond's words, "scribes could try their hands, and not unsuccessfully, at editing"; cf. also her *Chaucer: A Biographical Manual*, p. 109.

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